

## Sūrah Lahab

### Central Theme and Relationship with Preceding and Succeeding Sūrahs

My mentor Imām Ḥamīd Uddin Farāhī has dealt so comprehensively and aptly with the central theme of this *sūrah* and its relationship with the preceding and succeeding *sūrahs* that instead of writing anything myself, I will just quote a few excerpts from his exegesis.

He writes:

It has been mentioned in the exegesis of Sūrah Naṣr that just as the Almighty completed the mission of the Prophet (sws) on the conquest of Makkah, similarly He ended the Book revealed to him on the mention of this great victory. This is an indication to the fact that the truth had reached its central place. It was the conquest of Makkah which was the final assignment of the Prophet (sws) because the House of God was the centre of monotheism and Islam and the fountainhead of the religion of Abraham (sws). After this, the only thing needed was perseverance and steadfastness for which the three succeeding *sūrahs* were appended to this *sūrah*: Sūrah Ikhḷāṣ which is a treasure trove of monotheism and the foundation of religion and then Sūrah Falaq and Sūrah Nās as supplications which provide perseverance and also protect this treasure of monotheism from the onslaughts of the devils among men and jinn.<sup>1</sup>

After this, Imām Farāhī has mentioned the wisdom in the placement of Sūrah Lahab in between Sūrah Naṣr and the three *sūrahs* which come after Sūrah Lahab:

It is evident from these introductory remarks that all these *sūrahs*: Sūrah Naṣr, Sūrah Ikhḷāṣ, and the *mu‘awwadhatayn* are arranged together harmoniously. Hence the placement of Sūrah Lahab between them must necessarily be based on some wisdom otherwise this sequence of arrangement would become meaningless. Consequently, after deliberation on this issue, it becomes evident that the conquest and dominance mentioned in Sūrah Naṣr is actually predicted in and explained in Sūrah Lahab. Thus as per the overall

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1. Farāhī, *Majmū‘ah Tafāsīr*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1998), 485.

sequence of arrangement of these *sūrahs*, it is implied that the Almighty made His Prophet victorious and destroyed his enemies. Accordingly, at another place, the Almighty has said:

جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا (٨١:١٧)

The truth has become manifest and falsehood has been routed. Indeed, falsehood was bound to be routed. (17:81)

A very apt example of this sequence is the sermon delivered by the Prophet (sws) at the door of the Ka'bah on the day Makkah was conquered. He is reported to have said:

لا إله إلا الله وحده صدق وعده ونصر عبده وهزم الأحزاب وحده

There is no god except the one God. He fulfilled His promise and helped His servant and alone defeated all enemy groups.<sup>2</sup>

On the face of it, these are just three separate sentences. In reality, for a man of vision, they mention the subject matter of the three *sūrahs* in the same sequence as these *sūrahs* occur. The first sentence “there is no god except the one God” is the subject matter of Sūrah Kāfirūn; the second “He fulfilled His promise and helped His servant” that of Sūrah Naṣr and the third “and alone defeated all enemy groups” that of Sūrah Lahab. In other words, just as these three sentences are in sequence for a man of vision, similarly, those who reflect on the subject matter of these *sūrahs* would find them in a meaningful sequence.<sup>3</sup>

### **Sūrah's Place of Revelation and the Prediction it makes**

One important question about this *sūrah* is whether it was revealed in Makkah or in Madīnah. Most exegetes regard it to be a Makkan *sūrah*. However, this opinion does not seem sound. The only argument they cite in support of their opinion is that this *sūrah* is the answer to the insolence and disrespect shown by Abū Lahab for the person of the Prophet (sws). Some narratives mention that when the Prophet (sws) was directed by the Almighty to warn his near ones from the wrath of God, he, one day, climbed the hillock of Ṣafā' and shouted the words: *wa ṣabāḥan*. In Arabia, these words were considered an alarm for some imminent danger. After hearing these words, all families of the Quraysh gathered around the Prophet (sws). He asked them that if he were to inform them that a great

2. Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, vol. 4 (n.p.: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), 185, (no. 4547).

3. Farāhī, *Majmū'ah Tafāsīr*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lahore: Faran Foundation, 1998), 486.

army on the other side of the hillock was waiting in ambush to attack them, would they believe him? All of them replied in the affirmative because they had never heard him lie. At this, the Prophet (sws) said that if this was so, he would warn them of a great punishment that will come to them. Abū Lahab instantly responded with the words: تَبَّأُ لَكَ هَذَا دَعَوْتُنَا (May you be cursed! Did you call us for this reason).<sup>4</sup>

Exegetes say that it is this incident which occasioned the revelation of this *sūrah*. In other words, when Abū Lahab misbehaved with the Prophet (sws) by uttering these words, the Almighty in order to assure the Prophet (sws) revealed this *sūrah* in condemnation of Abū Lahab and his wife. Since this incident occurred early in the Makkan period, exegetes regard this *sūrah* to belong to that time. Now, as far as this incident is concerned, one cannot deny it; however, for various reasons it is improbable that this *sūrah* was revealed in response to Abū Lahab's misdeemeanour and to condemn him and his wife.

Firstly, it seems unlikely that the misbehaviour of an adversary of a Prophet (sws) would be responded to in such a tit-for-tat manner. Abū Lahab was not the only one who showed such enmity and disrespect to the Prophet (sws). Most leaders of Makkah and Tā'if were involved in this offence; however, in response to these excesses, the Prophet (sws) not only showed perseverance and ignored them, he urged his Companions (sws) also to adopt this attitude of forbearance and the Almighty too directed him repeatedly to adhere to it. Never did the Prophet (sws) utter even a word of condemnation in response to even the severest display of disrespect to him by any of them. He had been directed by the Almighty to call his people to the truth with wisdom and with kindly exhortation and he always adhered to this directive. He did not even label his people as *kuffār* until, as evident from my exegesis of Sūrah Kāfirūn, the truth had been communicated to them to such an extent that they were left with no excuse to deny it and until the time had arrived to migrate from them after announcing his acquittal what to speak of condemning and censuring them. The prophets before him adopted no different a methodology. How then is it possible that right at the beginning of his preaching mission, he became so offended by a remark of his uncle that for his assurance a whole *sūrah* be revealed as a result – a *sūrah* in which according to our exegetes not only is his uncle taken to task but also his aunt.

Secondly, there is a world of difference between the words of Abū Lahab تَبَّأُ لَكَ and the words تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ of this *sūrah*. The former do imply condemnation and are used to demean and debase someone; however, this does not mean that other idioms which begin with the

4. Abū al-Qāsim 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh Madīnah Dimashq*, vol. 67 (Beirut: Dār al-fikr, 1995) 165.

word **تَبَّ** also carry in them the meaning of humiliating and demeaning someone. Had the revealed words been **تَبَّ لِأَبِي لَهَبٍ** there could have been a possibility that Abū Lahab was being paid back in the same coins; however, the revealed words are **تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ**. These words in no way have a ring of condemnation and reprimand, but as, will be explained later, they refer to the end of Abū Lahab's political dominance, a defeat of all his friends and allies and a devastation of his pomp and wealth. In other words, this sentence is not a statement of fact; it is a prediction of Abū Lahab's destruction given in the past tense. This prediction was made when the truth had been communicated to him in such an ultimate form that he was left with no excuse to deny it. It is thus incorrect to believe that this *sūrah* is an early Makkah one. It was revealed when the signs of Abū Lahab's destruction were becoming evident. He died a little after the battle of Badr; thus the revelation of this *sūrah* too should be around this period. It is also evident from the style of the *sūrah* that it was revealed before his death. Had it been revealed after his death the style of the *sūrah* would have been like **أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ** (Have you not seen?) or words similar to it. The past tense adopted in the opening verse of the *sūrah* is employed for expressing the certainty of a future event. Examples of this style abound in the Qur'ān and we have referred to them several times earlier.

### Text and Translation

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (١) مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ (٢) سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (٣) وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ (٤) فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ (٥)

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Ever Merciful.

Both hands of Abū Lahab have been broken and he himself shall perish. Neither did his wealth benefit him nor what he had earned. He shall be cast into a blazing Fire; his wife too while carrying firewood. There will be a twisted rope round her neck. (111:1-5)

### Explanation

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ (١)<sup>5</sup>

The Arabic word means **تَبَّ** “to perish and end up in loss”. From this, the idiom **تَبَّتْ يَدَا فُلَانٍ** has been formed, which can only mean that both hands of such and such a person have failed to achieve an objective. Failure of both hands is a complete picture of one's helplessness. If it is

5. Both hands of Abū Lahab have been broken and he himself shall perish.

said تَبَّتْ يَدَاهُ then this would mean “he was totally unable to compete”. Similarly, the words كَسَرَ يَدٌ (his hands broke) are a portrayal of crushing someone’s force.

A couplet of Fanad al-Zamānī reads:

وَتَرَكْنَا دِيَارَ تَغْلِبَ قَفْرًا  
وَكَسَرْنَا مِنَ الْعَوَاةِ الْجَنَاحَا

(We flattened the area of Taghlib and broke the hands of its arrogant [people])

In Hebrew, a sister language of Arabic, this idiom is used also. In the Book of Ezekiel, it is written:

In the eleventh year, in the first month on the seventh day, the word of the Lord came to me. I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. It has not been bound up for healing or put in a splint so as to become strong enough to hold a sword. Therefore this is what the sovereign LORD says: I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break both his arms, the good arm as well as the broken one, and make the sword fall from his hand. (Ezekiel, 30: 20-22)

It is evident from this excerpt that there is no element of condemnation and censure present in this word. It is only a prediction that Abū Lahab’s political power will be crushed and he will also perish. It needs to be appreciated that he has been mentioned by his honorific title (*kuniyyah*) and when Arabs mention someone thus, it is generally out of respect for him.

Here a question arises that in the whole of the Qur’ān no enemy of the Prophet (sws) has been mentioned by name; so what was special about Abū Lahab that he was mentioned by his name?

The answer to this question is that there can be several reasons for mentioning him by name; however, two of them are very significant.

First, the nature of enmity between the Prophet (sws) and Abū Lahab was extremely different from the one between him and his other enemies. The main difference which other leaders of Quraysh had with the Prophet (sws) was that they considered the religion preached by him to be against their ancestral religion; the reason for this enmity was not that they thought that this religion was a danger to their own person interests. They had great respect for the lofty morals towards which he would call people. Many nobles among the Quraysh held him in high esteem for urging people to be kind to the orphans, the needy and the slaves. They wanted that all these admirable efforts be undertaken. In

this regard, they thought highly of the Prophet (sws) because they found him to be an embodiment of exalted traits. The anger they had for him was because in his preaching he would censure their idols. It has already been indicated in the exegesis of Sūrah Kāfirūn that they were ready to compromise with him if he adopted a soft tone for their idols.

On the other hand, the enmity of Abū Lahab was entirely for the protection of his personal interests. He was in charge of the treasury of the Baytullāh, which was called *rifādah*. He had taken such control of it that a greater part of the money received would go into his own pockets instead of being spent on orphans, the poor and the pilgrims. As a result, he had become the Shylock of his times. When he heard the calls of the Prophet (sws) towards lofty morals and the verses which depicted the objectives of building the Baytullāh,<sup>6</sup> he felt that the time of his accountability was drawing near. If he did not make an immediate effort to curb the intensity of the Prophet's preaching, he would have to let go of all his vested interests from which he was being able to benefit at that time without any hindrance or impediment. He thus rose to make a concerted effort to oppose the Prophet (sws). Sūrah Humazah and some other *sūrahs* portray his character. People who agree or oppose a point of view whilst disregarding their personal interests have decency in them, even though their stance might not be correct; on the contrary, people who agree or oppose a point of view merely because of their personal interests are absolutely devoid of decency. It is because of this reason that there is a world of difference between the nature of enmity of Abū Jahal and Abū Sufyān and that of Abū Lahab. And it is because of this very reason that the name of Abū Lahab was specially mentioned so that people come to know of the character of people who are the real enemies of the truth and how the Almighty deals with them.

The second reason is that a trait of preaching of the prophets becomes evident from it: the real basis for association or disassociation with a prophet is the religion of God. It is people who become the companions and loved ones of a prophet who adopt the religion of God however much they be far from him and those who sever their relationship with him become adversaries of the religion of God, however much they may be near to him as regards being their kith and kin. In order to delineate this reality, the incidents of Noah's (sws) son, Abraham's (sws) father and Lot's (sws) wife are mentioned with great emphasis in the Qur'ān. For this very reason the name of Abū Lahab has been mentioned here: it should become evident from this mention that race and lineage have no status before God. A shepherd can become a loved one of a prophet if he accepts his message and if an uncle of his rejects his message, his

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6. Many *sūrahs* of this group like Balad, Fīl and Quraysh discuss this topic.

relation with God and the prophet will stand severed. In other words, this is a practical testimony of the declaration of acquittal against the disbelievers mentioned in Sūrah Kāfirūn.

A question arises here: The words تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ were seemingly enough to predict the downfall of Abū Lahab; what then is the use of the words وَتَبَّ after them? The answer to this question is that the first part is a prediction of his political downfall and the second part is a prediction of his own death. Consequently, these predictions materialized word for word. There were many of his special allies and cronies among the leaders of the Quraysh who were killed in the battle of Badr. This really damaged his political status. Then soon after this battle he was inflicted with small-pox. For fear that this disease might be contagious, neither his associates nor his sons and other relatives inquired after his health. It was in this state of helplessness that he died and for many days his dead body rotted in his house. At last, when his sons got tired of the taunts of people, they hired a few negroes and with their help threw his corpse in the upper region of Makkah and covered it with stones and pebbles which were flung from a distance. It should be kept in consideration that flinging stones at someone in those times was tantamount to cursing him.

This fact also needs to remain in mind that all leaders of the Quraysh participated in the battle of Badr with great fervour and enthusiasm; however, Abū Lahab stayed back because of cowardice. In fact, he forced a person from whom he had no hope of recovering a loan to take part in the battle in lieu of the loan. This person did take part and was most probably killed whilst the spineless Abū Lahab remained in his house; however, even this scheme could not save him from death. Very soon, as I have indicated earlier, he was inflicted with small-pox and died a humiliating death. In my opinion, the words وَتَبَّ refer to this dreadful fate of his.

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۖ (٢)

For those who have greed for money, money is everything. So much so, they are overcome with the evil notion that money will even save them from the grasp of God. In Sūrah Humazah, this mentality of such money-worshipping miserly people is revealed in the following words:

الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ (١٠٤: ٢-٣)

He who amassed wealth and counted it over thinking that his wealth has rendered him immortal. (104:2-3)

7. Neither did his wealth benefit him nor what he had earned

Whilst explaining these verses, I have written that the words actually portray Abū Lahab and his companions. Such people never think that one day they will have to face God and that He can put them through such a trial which will make them realize the shallowness of wealth. All his life, Abū Lahab remained under this false notion and at last the time did come when he saw from his very eyes that even the greatest sum of money cannot save man from God's grasp.

Exegetes have recorded many opinions while interpreting the words وَمَا كَسَبَ. Some think that they refer to his sons. Although it is true, as pointed out earlier, that in the end even the sons of Abū Lahab could not be of any use to him, however this interpretation seems far-fetched. Some others regard them to refer to his illegal earnings; notwithstanding the fact that these words are inappropriate for such an interpretation, the words مَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُ مَالُهُ leave no need for this interpretation because it would amount to mere repetition. In my opinion, these words refer to deeds which he did whilst thinking them to be virtuous; however, because of his evil disposition and his subscription to polytheism they have no value. It should remain in consideration that he was in charge of the treasury of the Baytullāh. Therefore, he had to see to some welfare works for the poor, the indigent and the pilgrims. However, he was forced to carry out these as mere pretence so that they could cover up his misdeeds. Such works have no value before the Almighty.

سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ (٣)<sup>8</sup>

The two preceding verses depict Abū Lahab's fate in this world. In this verse, is depicted the fate he will encounter in the Hereafter: He shall be cast into a blazing Fire. The fire has been described by the words ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ. The person who will be cast into it is called by the honorific title أَبُو لَهَبٍ (Abū Lahab). In accordance with this name, he will enter a fire which has a similar name. لَهَبٌ means "flame". It seems that Abū Lahab had a reddish-white complexion like that of a flame. For this reason, he either himself adopted this honorific title or his flatterers called him by this name and this honorific title became so famous that his real name: 'Abd al-'Uzzā was forgotten. By this description, the Qur'ān has pointed to the reality that the very redish white complexion which was a source of pride for him in this world will lead him to doom. He will be cast into a fire whose flames would be blazing. The message which is meant to be put across is that pride on outer beauty has no value; it can lead a person to ruin if there is no inner beauty to go along with it.

8. He shall be cast into a blazing Fire



وَأَمْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ (٤) ٩

The verses say that his wife will also be cast into the blazing fire with him and she will be carrying firewood. The reason that his wife too will meet this fate is right in accordance with justice: she herself was his associate in his crimes which led him to Hell. At times, wife and children become a source for a person committing certain crimes which not only ruin him but also his wife and children. For this very reason the Qur'ān has said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ (١٤:٦٤)

Believers! Some among your spouses and your children are also your enemies: beware of them. (64:14)

The manner in which a person's wife and children are regarded as his enemies is that a person while trying to comply with their unwarranted and needless desires and while wrongly pampering them becomes indifferent to the directives of God and becomes guilty of breeching these directives. In this respect, the wife and the children are called a trial and the Prophet (sws) has warned that a person's children can make him stingy and fearful. It seems that like unseemly women, the wife of Abū Lahab also was fond of fashion and jewelry, had a great greed for wealth and also possessed a proclivity for showing off. She ruined the already ruined temperament of Abū Lahab. So much so, she also became worthy of the same punishment as that of her husband.

There exists a lot difference of opinion in the interpretation of the expression حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ. Most exegetes think that this expression humiliatingly depicts what her state was in this world. Like a slave-lady, she would go to the forest with a rope dangling in her neck in order to gather a pieces of wood. This is the most famous of all interpretations. However, the more famous it is, the farther away it is from the truth.

It should be kept in consideration that it was the Quraysh who ruled Arabia. Among the Quraysh, the tribe of Banū Hāshim in particular was the real masters of Arabia. Abū Lahab being a member of a very rich clan was very rich himself. In the times of the Prophet (sws), he held such an esteemed position in the religious polity of the Quraysh that he virtually had the reigns of power in his own hands. Can it be imagined that the wife of such an affluent leader needed to go to the forest to gather wood? Such was the state of affairs of these wealthy people that each possessed several slave men and women and such was the delicate

9. His wife too while carrying firewood

temperament of their wives that they would regard suckling their own children as something below their dignity. Even the commoners among them would hire women of other tribes to suckle their children.

Abū Lahab's wife was no ordinary lady. She was Umm Jamīl bint Ḥarb, a lady of very high status from among the tribe of Banū 'Abd al-Shams who was wedded into the Banū Hāshim tribe. If due consideration is given to the position her husband held in the Arab nobility, it would not be an exaggeration to say that she had the same status as is held these days by the first lady of a country.

Probably because of this very reason some people have said that she would bring thorny bushes and throw them at the door of the Prophet's house and some others say that she had a habit of back-biting and twisting matters and then wrongly conveying them to others to create discord between people. They opine that the words *حَمَّالَةَ الْحُطْبِ* portray this bad habit of hers. These interpretations are so baseless and so far off from the linguistic principles of Arabic that to criticize them would be wasting the time of the readers; hence, I will ignore them. For details, people can consult the exegesis of Imām Farāhī.

In my opinion, the word *حَمَّالَةَ الْحُطْبِ* is in an accusative of state (*حَال*) and it depicts her state when she will be cast into Hell together with her husband. At that time, her situation will be akin to the criminal who carries the very instruments which are responsible for his or her execution.

Except for regarding *حَمَّالَةَ* as an accusative of state (*حَال*), there can be no other possibility to explain its syntactical construction, in which case all the above mentioned interpretations become baseless. This is because if *حَمَّالَةَ* is regarded as an accusative of state, these interpretations become grammatically impossible.

The state of affairs of a criminal on the Day of Judgement is described at various places in the Qur'ān. If this is deliberated upon, the portrayal of Abū Lahab's wife by the words *حَمَّالَةَ الْحُطْبِ* is in accordance with this description:

وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَى ظُهُورِهِمْ إِلَّا سَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ (٣١:٦)

And they shall bear their burdens on their backs and listen! evil shall be what they will be carrying. (6:31)

In Sūrah Naml, this description is even more elaborate:

لِيَحْمِلُوا أَوْزَارَهُمْ كَامِلَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَمِنْ أَوْزَارِ الَّذِينَ يُضِلُّونَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ (٢٥:١٦)

So that they carry all their burdens on the Day of Judgement together

with the burdens of those who in their ignorance were misled by them. (16:25)

It is evident from these details that she would not only be carrying the burden of her own sins on her back, but also the ones of her husband's for which she herself was a motive and that this burden would be in the form of firewood.

It can thus be surmised from this discussion that Abū Lahab's wife is not mentioned in this verse to appease emotions by condemning and censuring her, as has been generally understood. On the contrary, her mention is to effectively drive home the message specifically to the female community that how an impious lady can lead not only herself to doom but also her husband and children. The Qur'ān has mentioned the female community right beside the male one so that each can learn a lesson more effectively from the fate of their own community. Since Abū Lahab's wife belonged to the upper strata of the society, hence both affluent ladies as well as slave ladies could learn a lesson from her fate.

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ<sup>10</sup> (٥)

These words complete the portrayal of Abū Lahab's wife drawn in the previous verse. She will wear a thick rope round her neck – the one which is carried by slave-women who gather firewood. It is strange that our exegetes are of the opinion that this will be her state in the Hereafter; so it is odd that they have not regarded the previous verse to relate to the Hereafter because according to the linguistic principles of Arabic the two verses are so deeply connected that one cannot sever them in any way.

The word مَسَدٍ is used for the fiber, leaves or crust of dates. Strong ropes are made out of it. Hence the word is also used for a resilient rope whether it is made of the fiber of dates or of leather or of something similar. Its use for the rope of a spinning wheel is very common which is a testimony to the fact it is commonly used for a strong and thick rope.

The apparent interpretation of the verse is that when Abū Lahab's wife will rise on the Day of Judgement, a sturdy rope will be dangling from her neck which will be as thick as the rope found in the necks of slave-women who carry firewood. A little deliberation shows that the addition of this feature to her brings out the following facts:

1. It explains the state of Abū Lahab's wife mentioned in the expression حَمَّالَةَ الْخَطَبِ.
2. It depicts her state of humiliation which she will encounter in the Hereafter.

10. There will be a twisted rope round her neck

3. It illustrates the harmony between the deeds and the consequences of these deeds: the very necklace she used to arrogantly wear in this world will be transformed into a thick rope in the next world. As a result, she will resemble a slave-woman who goes out to fetch firewood whilst a rope is suspended from her neck.

4. Conceited women besides being fond of embellishing themselves are equally fond of showing off. For this reason, they pay special attention to the weight and size of their ornaments; for this reason the rope round the neck of Abū Lahab's wife is depicted to be a thick one.

By the grace of God, with these lines, the *tafsīr* of this *sūrah* reaches its end. فالحمد لله حمدا كثيرا (so abundant gratitude be to God)

Lahore,

17<sup>th</sup> July 1980

3<sup>rd</sup> Ramaḍān, 1400 AH

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